

# Cellular Telephone Use Guidelines

in Washington State Government

***September 1993***

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# ***Cellular Telephone Use Guidelines***

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## Introduction

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The effective management and application of information technology (including cellular telephones) improves the quality of service delivered to Washington's citizens, the productivity of the state work force, and the overall cost effectiveness of state operation. Agencies whose staff use cellular phones should have policies and procedures in place for acquisition, appropriate usage, and control. Rather than issuing a formal policy, the Department of Information Services (DIS) is releasing these guidelines to assist agencies with the development of their individual policies.

## Sample Agency Policy

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The following guidelines provide an example of elements to be addressed when developing an agency policy:

### **Business needs should determine which agency employees use cellular telephones.**

Government use of cellular phones is increasing as employees are asked to do more with less. Cellular technology provides assistance with disaster recovery and offers portable alternatives for immediate communication. Time and distance can be managed more effectively.

### **Cellular telephones are to be acquired following the agency's and the Department of Information Services' approved information technology acquisition policy and procedures.**

The following factors may impact agency costs for cellular phones and should be reflected in the acquisition decision:

- higher cellular usage costs compared to alternative communication choices
- state contract rate vs. personal billing account rate
- level of employee usage
- reimbursement for usage
- type of equipment and number of lines

State master contracts shall not be used to obtain cellular equipment or services for personal use. Agencies and employees are not prohibited from accepting group discount rates for purchasing and using cellular phones offered separately from the state master agreement.

### **State owned cellular telephones and services are only to be used to conduct agency business, except in the event of an emergency. (RCW 42.18.217)**

Prior approval and usage agreements should be established which addresses use of employee-owned cellular telephones for state business use.

**The agency reserves the right to monitor the use of all state-owned cellular telephones.**

- Cellular telephones should not be used when a less costly alternative is safe, convenient, and readily available.
- Records shall be maintained to monitor **shared usage** of cellular phones.

**Cellular transmissions are not secure.**

- Employees should use discretion in relaying confidential information.
- Reasonable precautions should be made to prevent equipment theft and vandalism.

**An inventory of agency-owned cellular equipment should be maintained for internal auditing purposes.**

## Definitions

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**Agency:** Any governmental organization defined in RCW 42.18.030. Judicial, legislative, and educational institutions could also utilize these guideline provisions.

**Cellular telephone:** Portable phone equipment which connects via switched cell-to-cell or wireless communication.

**Cellular transmissions:** The communications link, established via radio frequency, that connects cellular phone calls.

**Security:** Provision that assures safety, protection, or defense.